

824 manufacturing baskets, sieves and mats; and still another 25 in the hunting activities of boys (arrows, bows, traps, glue.) Over 100 are known more particularly for their edible fruits or roots and 45 are greens or relishes; 230 are well-known in the everyday medical pharmacoporia, and of these 60 are magical. Among other well-known uses are those of the grasses and sedges (15) from which dancing or initiation costumes are made and those (12) connected with games. Some 5 were considered noxious weeds and 8 had certain taboos attached to them. Plants with conspicuous flowers are not specially observed, and one asks the ordinary man in vain as to the name and uses of the more delicate flowering plants; on the whole, he is far better acquainted with trees than with shrubs and grasses, unless used as relishes.

824 What is striking is that the ordinary man regards the flora from a most
789 practical point of view. Only a small proportion of the well-known plants have uses which are mainly magical, and knowledge based upon empirical observation overshadows that derived from mystical conceptions. One does not 'doctor' wood to strengthen it against the attacks of termites or woodborers; one selects the proper tree. In 90 out of 100 cases the quality of the wood, not any magical manipulation, is important for the purpose to which it is put, especially if the purpose is economic; and it is in this sense that empirical knowledge is highly developed. Even in the medical

824 sphere, which is predominantly magical, the ordinary man places his
757 faith in the observed action of the herb he uses. The cure may be merely violent internal disturbances, which, in view of the supposed nature of the illness, may be regarded as necessary. The use is not for that reason

• [753] magical. Many diseases are conceived to have their seat in the stomach; they are to be thrown out by a purgative; and for them purgatives are used with a vengeance. Among doctors, of course, all sorts of magical [753] remedies are added; but that is the sphere of the specialist. The ordinary man uses remedies of which the viable effects are empirically related to the disturbances which he conceives to be the causes of the disease.

824 From close observation of the qualities of plants, the Lovedu have
192 arrived at some classification of the flora. They recognize the similarity of plants of the same genus and, if external likeness is a matter of practical interest, there is often a similarity of the word used to designate the various species of the genus. This does not mean that they proceed upon genetic principles; to anatomical similarities in flowers, for instance, they are quite indifferent. If the qualities of two plants of the same genus are to their way of thinking significantly similar, the plants might receive names that are similar; if the qualities are dissimilar, they often know that the two plants are related, though they have different names. The same species modified in its external features by different environments is often given the same name. Species of the same genus are likewise sometimes distinguished by qualifications of the generic name. *Khiphadue* of the plateau (*Aha naha*) is, for instance, *Gymnosporia senegalensis*; *Khiphadue* of stony places (*Aha makhasareni*) is *Gymnosporia buxifolia*. Again, *muduro*, *mudurotsi*, *mudurotsibi*, and *mudurotsinga*, all containing the root *dur-*, are all species of *Combretum*. On the other hand, *muguri*, *mukundi*, and *muhakela thudu* are also species of *Combretum*, but there are

593 is the interest of a sister in the house established by her cattle that she may on occasion even exercise some control in her brother's choice of a wife. Dwagu wanted to marry Mabula, who was already married. His sister's husband then said, 'We shall not allow you to use my cattle to marry that woman. She will bring nothing but trouble.' If the wife obtained by means of the sister's cattle is badly treated by her husband, she may run to his sister, who will intervene on her behalf, or even in extreme cases arrange for her to live permanently away from her husband, who could then never claim a return of the bride-price from his wife's parents. Muhale, whom we knew well, had, under the influence of his second wife, chased away his chief wife, who ran to his sister. She advised the wife to make some pardon beer and take it as a peace-offering, but when he refused this his sister arranged for the woman to live with a widow in the village next door to her. Now, when Muhale's second wife quarrels and refuses to cook for him, he takes refuge with the wife he chased away till the storm is over!

[782] The influence of a sister is reinforced by her religious position. At the annual harvest offering to the gods, it is always the eldest sister in the family who has to officiate. She is the one best able to intercede with the spirits. Any displeasure or secret grievance against her brother on her part may have the effect of stirring up the spirits to cause illness in his household, especially among his children (certain other relatives also have this power, but one hears most often of the sister). Hence it is said, 'The sister should roast pigs; if she roasts the village [is angry] it will go up in flames' (*Mhadi e hadiga dithaga; ya hadiga mutse u ya ma*). Sometimes a sister may threaten her brother, saying, 'If I complain, nothing will be good in your village.' On the death of the father, it is the eldest sister who, together with the father's brother, divides out the inheritance, and, at the only installation of a district head that we were able to witness, the emblems of office were handed over to the young heir's sister for him, though he was already in his twenties. In view of all these facts, a man's sister has great influence over him and may be called to remonstrate with him, more especially in matters affecting his own household when even his parents have been unsuccessful. But she has no right to interfere without just cause and, if she were to make needless trouble, her brother would very soon ask her to leave his village in peace.

Not all sisters play the role that has been ascribed in general terms to a man's sister. Though every sister is potentially priestess and guardian of her brother's household, in practice all these offices are seldom combined in one person. In religious ceremonies affecting the family as a whole, the eldest daughter of the chief wife would officiate; in case of illness, a man's uterine sister might be asked to officiate. If the sister whose cattle has been used is younger than her brother, she may have little influence as compared with her elder sister; furthermore, where the sister is a woman of no personality, her influence may be negligible. It is a man's uterine sisters that play the biggest part in his life, for in this, 605 as in everything, the individual family is always asserting itself as against 595 the larger, polygynous family group. A classificatory sister, one by the mother's sister or father's brother, or one by a wife of the father other

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foundation of happy marriage. It is an attitude inculcated by the immense marriage ceremonial, and it must be understood in its total complex within the social structure. Sexual adventures and compatibilities may be sought outside the marriage relationships. And so we have the *mulawu* institution, a realistic concession to the impossibility of completely conditioning so primeval a force as sexual attraction to the purposes of the social structure; it also meets the difficulty of the long suckling period. As might be expected, it is married rather than unmarried people who have their lovers (*vadavu*). Nevertheless, a European finds it difficult to understand that old women so frequently have liaisons with young married men and that these men so frequently seek their adventures with women who might well be their mothers or grandmothers. But in the Lovedu system it is not unnatural that our preferences and our conceptions of sexual attraction should as often as not be completely reversed. 581 837

The ideal for girlhood is chastity, but the society is rather impatient of both men and women who spy upon the love affairs of their spouses. These affairs are not matters to be talked about; but, on the other hand, despite the mocking songs sung on special occasions (the *eyali*) about deflowered girls, the society has a humane outlook towards what we call illegitimacy. Unmarried girls among pagans rarely have illegitimate children; this is more frequent among Christians. The seducer is fined twice as much as in the case of adultery with a married woman, yet only one-third the amount that is customary among Shangana-Tonga. The fine is certainly not the main deterrent; nor is the disgrace of the girl. She maintains her position in society; she is congratulated by friends and relatives; even the queen herself may, as we have seen, pay a visit to see and praise the infant. The girl has been 'spoilt', but she proudly displays her baby. She will not have offers of marriage from young men, but older men are wiser. Great blame falls upon the guilty man. It is a curious mixture of values, for there is no doubt that virginity in a girl is highly esteemed. In the marriage ceremonial, as we have seen, virginity entitles both the bride's mother and herself to special rewards. There is even a symbolical reference to it in the calabash that the bride used to take with her to her husband's home: if it was whole, it occasioned joy and was proudly worn by her younger sister; if not, the girl's people had to make amends with beer. 831 848 684

New values and sensitiveness to-day insist that the absence of chastity be concealed, not that its presence be publicly applauded or rewarded. Girls are still examined, especially at the *akoba*, but the matter is private; and the public display of a calabash has fallen into disuse. Yet the sins of the girl-mother are not visited on the innocent infant; it remains a thing of joy to every one. Abortions are said to be common, but the only evidence adduced is the high incidence of lung diseases (*glxt* or *vuluxlxt* *eye* *sasadi*). A man gets *glxt* from intercourse with a woman who has had an abortion; it is not merely the most dreaded of all diseases, a death from *glxt* may prevent rain, and men are again and again in their lives warned against promiscuously consorting with women. 847 753

Sexual compatibility between husband and wife is a minor matter. 573

[127] internal snake believed to be intimately bound up with fecundity and
 842 childbirth. Every one is said to have a snake in his stomach. It is not a
 753 real snake, yet it is conceived of as having a head and of being able to
 crawl up to a man's neck (causing what we call indigestion) and running
 back again when he coughs. When a person has stomach-ache it is often
 said, 'The snake is biting,' while dysentery is referred to as 'red' or
 'white snake', according to the stage of the disease. The most important
 842 function of this snake, and one that forms a common subject of conversa-
 tion in connection with barrenness, is, however, its reproductive one. It is
 believed that semen comes from a man's snake; if his snake is 'no good',
 a child will not be born. The snake of a woman is sometimes identified
 with the womb and for conception it is necessary that this snake should
 accept the semen. There are two possibilities which prevent conception:
 either the snake's head may be wrongly oriented or it may catch up the
 semen, but spit it out again. In the first case the remedy is to 'turn
 round' its head by medical treatment, in which very often the womb of a
 scapegoat is used. In the second case, since the snake rejects the semen
 unless the bloods of husband and wife agree and the snake of the man
 may be as much at fault as that of the woman, it is usual to include both
 husband and wife in treatment for barrenness. If six to nine months
 elapse after marriage without conception having taken place, steps are at
 once taken to set the matter right.

826 Though the Lovedu have no knowledge of the circulation of the blood,
 753 they assign to it properties which lie at the basis of their medical theory.
 Blood is so generally believed to be the root of most ills that a Native
 describing his symptoms always says, 'I am pierced by blood.' Rheuma-
 tism, stiffness after exercise, a pain or swelling in any part of the body,
 is attributed to blood that has collected there or blood which is 'boiling',
 making the body hot and feverish. Swellings of all kinds, including
 goitre, are therefore always cupped to get rid of surplus blood, and blood-
 letting as a cure for headache and other ills is as popular with the Lovedu
 827 as it was in Europe not so long ago. The beating of the heart is not
 believed to be continuous: it is associated with sudden fright and with
 illness; but, though it is known that often the heart beats loudly when one
 is not ill, they have no idea why it should do so. Veins contain blood, but
 go by the same name as sinews and muscles, all of which are believed to
 give strength to the body. Occasionally, though infrequently, individuals
 are to be found who have other ideas. Thus David, a Christian who has
 often worked in towns and has a mind of his own, has his own theory as
 to the function of the heart, a deduction from his observations on dying
 fowls. He believes that the heart beats, not to circulate, but to exclude
 the blood, and the moment the heart stops beating the blood enters it,
 causing death to the fowl or person.

753 A considerable list of terms for different diseases indicates that distinc-
 tions are recognised, but it is easy to be misled into believing that the
 Natives' knowledge is greater than it really is. Some terms are peculiarly
 Native without any corresponding category among us, but many, like small-
 pox, measles, mumps, fever, consumption, migraine, syphilis, epilepsy,
 show appreciation of causes or symptoms which fit into our scheme of

classification. Practice is characterized by vagueness and a very wide and loose, instead of a specific, use of many of these terms. The term *khitshipidi* denotes primarily a swelling or tumour containing white matter. In practice we have found it applied to scrofula or glandular swellings below the ear, which were cut open and squeezed, to slime coughed up and said to be internal *khitshipidi*, and to general aching of all the teeth or tenderness of the gums with no sign of matter. Similarly the term *yobe*, bleeding of the nose, is often applied when there is no bleeding, but general debility, in which case the trouble is thought to be caused by blood in the body that should, but has not, come out. Such false correlations are due not merely to wrong conceptions of cause and effect—any evidence suggesting the presence of blood suffices to incriminate that arch enemy of health—but also to careless observation and loose reasoning. This laxity in medical conceptions is in marked contrast to the logic and coherence of other arrangements of the society. Inaccurate observation and undeveloped symptomatology must be attributed to the extensive reliance, firstly, for diagnosis of all but the most everyday illness upon the divining dice, and, secondly, for curing upon what in the last resort is the psychological rather than the physical. 753

Lovedu therapeutics includes a number of treatments that have undoubted curative value, but many more are based on purely magical assumptions. On the whole, those which we should consider to be of some medical value are chiefly home remedies of the humble non-divining herbalist. The higher one goes in the medical scale, the more divorced from scientific principles become the treatments. Simple ailments are dealt with very much as among Europeans: sniffing up water is used for colds, the milk of a certain euphorbia is supplied to draw out deep-lying thorns; splints of strips of wood are used for broken limbs or sprains; teeth are extracted by being levered up by means of an instrument like a poker, which is inserted between the roots, a method said to be no more painful than the clumsy use of European forceps. Very detrimental to the speedy recovery of wounds is, however, the practice of scraping or washing off all matter before each application of healing powders. This destroys the new young tissues, delaying for months the healing of sores that normally takes weeks or even days. Use of enemas is unknown and emetics are not nearly as common as among the Zulu. With the Lovedu as with us the commonest treatment is the drinking of medicines. Instead, however, of the bottle of medicine we receive, a Native is given a small bundle of roots or twigs cut into even lengths to take home and boil in water which is drunk or used for making a soft porridge. Sometimes the medicine is bruised and a cold infusion made. There is none of the careful measurement of quantities characteristic of the mediaeval apothecary or of prescriptions found on Egyptian papyri, but the amounts used are not wholly undetermined, for in practice the smallest pot is used and 1 to 2½ pints of water are added; the dose seldom exceeds a few mouthfuls taken once or twice a day for a few days only. If this is not effective, something else will be tried. Wet cupping is a common home remedy, as the numerous scars on head and shoulders of people testify. After scarification, a cupping horn is applied, the narrow 757

comparison between the instructions of Native doctors at consultations and the actual manner in which these were carried out showed great discrepancies between the two. There are certain general principles known to all and on the whole people trust to their knowledge of these and the powers of the medicines themselves rather than slavishly following instructions. 758

The sick like to be in the open or in the sun, but it is for comfort and warmth, not because the curative power of nature or the need for nursing is recognized. An invalid generally spends the day lying wrapped up in his blanket in or near the courtyard or in the sheltered storage enclosure. This open-air sick-room, sunny or shady as the needs of the body dictate and protected from wind, is, in the absence of light, well-ventilated rooms, the best possible place for the health of the patient. At night, however, or when the patient is too ill to move, the sick-room is the kitchen hut, where the evening meal is cooked, and it is generally foul with smoke and full of people. A patient suffering from a bad cough is given a potsherd of sand to spit into. If at all possible, a patient goes outside to relieve himself, but if he is too weak to walk a broken pot is provided as a commode. Very sick people are given soft porridge without meat or relish, and great pains are taken to persuade patients to eat lest they lose strength and waste away. The treatment in diseases such as smallpox, measles, 757 and chickenpox, which one generally gets once only, is peculiar and shows how values and procedures used in other spheres of culture may become interwoven with medical practices. The illness is dealt with as if it were a stage in life like puberty or circumcision. When the first symptoms appear, the patient is isolated and a stick, placed across the hut door, warns people off, for *muridi* (shadow) will aggravate the illness if the patient comes into contact with certain people. After some days, when the rash has disappeared or the pustules no longer contain white matter, he is smeared with fat and ochre, whether he feels better or not, and allowed out. The treatment is called *hu cha*, the term used for going through the circumcision initiation. But there is another aspect of the treatment. The pox pustules are scraped daily with soaked bark of *mutere* (*Bridelia* sp.), the purpose as phrased being to cause the white matter to come out and to prevent the pustules from going deeply into the endodermis, thus leaving pock marks.

'Transition' diseases, as we may call those dealt with upon the pattern 753 of *hu cha*, lead us to consider some general conceptions underlying Lovedu medical practice and causation of disease. These conceptions remind us of the Greek theory of humours which long dominated European medicine and were at the basis of mediaeval physiology. Physical and mental qualities and dispositions were attributed to the four chief fluids or cardinal humours of the body, viz. blood, phlegm, choler, and melancholy or black choler. Choler, probably derived from the Greek word for bile and from which we get our word 'cholera', was, for instance, the humour causing irascibility of temper. The Lovedu attach less importance to temperament and have based their cardinal categories, not upon physiological fluids, but upon conceptions associated with shadow (*muridi*), mingling (*mahuma*), heat (*hu fisa*), and sex. These do not

● 753 constitute an exhaustive list, and their application extends over a wide field, which we might call the magico-religious.

Muridi (shadow) is conceived of as an evil power, but of its many properties the most emphasized is the property of aggravating disease. It is as if certain real evils cast a shadow which may infect those upon which it falls. If they are normal, healthy people, generally speaking they suffer no discomfort themselves, but they may act as carriers of the shadow, and by contact with others, especially those who are ill, they may transmit the evil as if they were intermediary hosts, weakening the patient and aggravating his illness. The host may transmit the shadow to both persons and things. A person who has attended a funeral or who has lost a close relative is infected by the shadow of death. Twins have [845] such great shadow that if they come near a sick person he will die: hence twins must be killed and are still generally killed, despite European law and the example of Christians to whose grown-up twins no specific evil can be attributed. A woman who has had a miscarriage has *muridi*. [843] Pregnancy up to but not after the end of the third month infects a woman with *muridi*, for a clear distinction is drawn between the two stages of pregnancy: before the end of the third month the foetus is amorphous, not a human being; after it, the foetus takes human form, the woman 'has grown', and a miscarriage is regarded as a death, so that people come to condole and there is a mourning period ended by the [removal of] 'dirt' rite (*khitshila*), just as for the most important adult. After childbirth a woman has *muridi*, but this is not the reason for her isolation. She remains in the hut till her child is strengthened, lest she bring to it shadows from outside. Girls over puberty and non-suckling, childbearing women, though having no definite *muridi*, are a potential source of danger to the sick, and men have not infrequently refused to allow us to wash their wounds with water drawn by such women. It is not at all clear, however, whether it is menstruation that is feared or the danger of possible early pregnancy. Sexual intercourse between husband and wife brings about a mild form of *muridi*; hence, if a very young child is ill, husband and wife [832] sometimes abstain from intercourse. [843] *Muridi* from sexual intercourse is believed to affect the meat of slaughtered cattle or goats unless certain precautions are taken, and causes stomach trouble to those who partake of it. Men who are sleeping with their wives are therefore not allowed to approach a slaughtered animal before its stomach has been pierced or to help skin it without first smearing their hands with leaves of *thebe* (*Amaranthus Thunbergii*) or other medicine. Here again, so it seems, the danger is not the actual intercourse, but the possibility of an unformed foetus in the womb. Thus, in the early stages of his wife's pregnancy, Nagambi was forbidden to approach slaughtered animals, but later, when pregnancy was advanced, the restriction fell away, even though he was still cohabiting with his wife.

753 A person whose upper teeth appear before the lower or whose molars
826 appear first is full of *muridi* and should be killed. In the area surrounding the royal village every child is brought to the queen for examination on the appearance of its first teeth. The mother carries with her a small basket of eleusine and, if all is well, it is said that the child has 'danced

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with joy' (u *pebede*); if not, there are no ululations of joy and, though to-day the child is allowed to live, it must be treated by a doctor. When several children have been brought, beer must be made by their mothers for the older women, the queen attends, and there is much joy. If a person whose teeth have appeared in the wrong order is not killed, he is called a *leshaga*. He must be most careful never to bite any one, for the wound will not respond to healing treatment. But it is believed that matter taken from the teeth of the *leshaga* may be applied as an antidote. It will be remembered that in the case of *Mabula v. Magasha* the parents of a *leshaga* who had bitten her co-wife were ordered to beg pardon and to allow the 'scraping' of the teeth of their daughter. They had denied that she was a *leshaga*, but the court decided that, *leshaga* or not, neither she nor they could refuse something that might help the wound. 753 826

Muridi is, on the whole, dangerous, not to its primary intermediary host, but to others. Its source is conceived to be usually a person, but it may also be places, such as cross-roads and large rivers which become infected owing to the number of people crossing them. Nor is all *muridi* equally dangerous. Precautions are taken to protect the sick against its influence; a sick person is smeared with medicine or a stick is placed to bar entrance to his hut, its warning against entering without permission being a function also of the stick barring the door of the hut of a newborn child. Allied to but not the same as *muridi* are *leridi* (monstrous shadow) and *lefala* (sinister spoor, the word for an ordinary track being *mufala*). A warrior who has killed an enemy has *leridi* and, unless purified, he stands in grave danger of becoming mad or extremely quarrelsome (one of the worst social sins). If two men have had sexual relations with the same woman and one of them is ill, the other must on no account come near lest his track (*lefala*) cause him to die. Similarly, the husband's mistress should take care to remain away from the hut of his wife when she is ill or in childbirth. 753 751

Makhuma, from *hu khuma*, to mix together, is a conception similar to *muridi*, but the evil, a kind of illness, infects the immediate host, who cannot transmit it to others. Critical changes especially constitute the source of the evil which mingles with or contaminates or infects the person who has just undergone the change or who, in the case of death, comes into contact with its baleful emanations. In all the initiations strengthening medicine is given the novices as an antidote to the *makhuma* to which they are subject after the initiation: for instance, the initiates in the boys' circumcision lodge are given black medicine just before the change from west to east to protect them from being injured (*hu khuma*) after entering the ordinary world. One may *khuma* if, after an absence from home during which a death has occurred, one eats food without some precautionary measure, such as chewing a piece of ant heap (*khithoni*). The treatment given after a death is chiefly to prevent the onset of *hu khuma* among relatives. A woman who has lost a child will cause her next child to *khuma* if she allows it to drink before her breasts have been doctored. Cattle may *khuma* after a death in the village or if women enter the kraal, and measures to fortify them are always taken 753

1 [See cat. 116, pp. 195-96 -- Analyst]

- 753 after the funeral. *Makhuma* also affects possessed people who fail to use their powdered medicine with the first-fruits.

Though usually associated with the stomach, the symptoms of *makhuma* are not very definite, diagnosis being chiefly *ex post facto*. If one child has died, any illness its successor might have, even beating of the fontanelle, is liable to be attributed to *makhuma*. After the miscarriage of Madume's wife, Dwagu, a non-related inmate of the same village, did not trouble to be purified when the doctor came; but when, shortly afterwards, his stomach became upset, he immediately attributed it to *makhuma* and hastened to take medicine for its removal.

[787] The conception of *khuma* has been extended into other fields. Divining bones *khuma* at the end of each month as well as when used to divine about a death, and must be washed in medicine before being used again.

[787] Similarly the rain charms of the queen are liable to *khuma* (or *figchela*) unless given the first-fruits and the first termites of the year to 'bite' (*luma*) before any one else in the royal area eats them, as also when certain people neglect certain observances, such as burial in wet soil of infants dying before their teeth have appeared. *Hu khuma* of the rain charms has serious consequences, causing drought throughout the country. That Christians do not observe these regulations has as little effect on the rain as when Europeans do not conform.

753 *Hu fesa*, or the state of being 'hot', is a conception far wider than
826 *muridi* or *makhuma* and is the antithesis of the condition of coolness which is conceived of as healthy, propitious, or right. The properties of this 'heat', which may be caused in a variety of ways, are not unlike physical heat. Bodily illness, even *muridi*, causes the blood to be 'hot' or to be 'boiling' and may be treated by 'cooling' the body: thus the *khitshila* ceremony, which removes the 'dirt' of death, also 'cools' people. The hair of near relatives is shaved with medicine and put in a wet place or in certain kinds of drought-resisting plants. But it is usually the source of the 'heat', not the 'heat' itself, the symptom of the disease, that is treated, though both may be dealt with. The blood of a woman in certain conditions—for example, after an abortion—is said to 'burn', she has (or is) *lesua* (great burning), and the man who has sexual intercourse with her also 'burns', but whether it is because the 'heat' is conducted to him or because of the disease, *gere* (coughing illness) or urethritis, which he contracts, is by no means clear. The treatment is directed at the disease in him, not towards counteracting the 'heat'. Often after steaming a patient, a river stone is pressed against all joints of the body and then taken back to the river, a treatment in which we may discern an attempt to 'cool', though it also contains the conception of 'throwing out'.

821 Since heat withers the vegetation and causes drought, it is opposed to
766 rain. Precautions must therefore be taken against whatever is thought to cause the country to be hot and dry. A man succumbing to *gere*, a person struck by lightning, a woman dying in childbirth, and the foetus of a miscarriage—all these must be buried in wet soil or with rain medicine if the country is to be kept 'cool' and the rains are to fall. Coolness connotes rightness. Charms protecting the village against witches are

754 sometimes called *mashothjo*, because they *rothja* (cause to be cool,

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calm, or soothe) the village. Cooling is an effective weapon against sorcery: when the doctor made Nagambi vomit the foreign object introduced into his stomach by a sorcerer and causing the illness *khilesa* (thing caused to be eaten) he ordered it to be buried in a wet place and water to be squirted (*hu phasa*) over it with an injunction to the disease to return to its sender. Even the gods must be kept cool, for if hot they stand up (*va eme*), are discontented, and make trouble; hence the black river stone in many shrines and perhaps also the river stones in the drums. 'To cool' might be translated by our phrases, to calm, to free from agitation, to soothe, to appease, or, more generally, to put right.

The great role of sex in medical practice can only be briefly dealt with. Many illnesses and even death are attributed to sexual intercourse in certain circumstances or to some supposed abnormality in the sexual organs. Some men and women are believed to have a small thick hair (*levooya*) in their genitals which enters the stomach of any one with whom they cohabit and there pecks (*hu goba*). The *levooya* from a man will cause the woman he impregnates to die in childbirth, and the *levooya* of a woman kills all her lovers. Pheduli, whose wife's death was attributed to *levooya*, found some difficulty in re-marrying, and the parents of the girl whose love overcame her fear insisted on his submitting to curative treatment before the marriage. But usually there is merely rumour that So-and-so has *levooya* and no definite precautions are taken. Men avoid intercourse with a menstruating woman, not because of danger to her, but because, as even educated men in the towns believe, they are liable to become afflicted with swollen penis or urethritis. *Mafa*, swelling of the whole body, is contracted if one, without previous steaming and mutual inoculation, cohabits with one's deceased brother's wife; but a stranger, though liable to get ill, does not contract *mafa*, because it is chiefly due to the 'dirt' of one's brother.

To *qcre* or *vuhudec vya vasadi*, the woman's disease, and the most dreaded of all diseases, more than 30 per cent. of the deaths of men during our stay among the Lovedu was attributed. It is believed to be contracted by a man if, without previous precautionary treatment, he has sexual intercourse with a woman who has had a miscarriage or abortion or whose child has died before weaning. So fatal is it regarded to be that, unless cured immediately, the patient's chances of getting well are seriously impaired by the weight of subtle mass suggestion and his complete surrender to the inevitable. One illustration, the death of an educated man and a close friend of ours, will suffice. He had an irritating cough which every one believed to be *qcre*, but one European doctor found nothing wrong, while another, to whom we explained our anxiety, diagnosed miocardiosis, which would readily respond to hospital treatment. Our friend had no faith in the diagnosis and refused to go to hospital; he resorted to one Native doctor after another and vainly endeavoured to get 'medicine' from the girl he suspected. He became more and more emaciated, resigned himself to his fate and within a month after examination by the second European doctor he was dead.

Qcre is not syphilis nor a sexual disease. Its main symptom is coughing, but any illness, even if there is hardly any cough, may be diagnosed as

833 *qere* if the circumstances of the personal relations of the patient justify
 753 such a diagnosis. People thought that Maqaradani's cough was *qere*, but when he insisted that he had no lovers it was diagnosed as *khileso*; Mulada's debility was probably due to chronic malaria, but his friends suspected that he had taken no precautionary measures before resuming co-habitation with his wife, who had miscarried after seven months. *Qere* is distinguished from *lefiha* (consumption) by its rapid course and the fact that *lefiha* (*hu fiha*, to breathe) is not caused by women. [847] *Qere* can be cured only in its earliest stages, an ingredient of the medicine being a portion of the abortion or, in the case of intercourse with a woman who has lost a child, can be prevented by steaming and mutual inoculation. The prevalence of *qere* suggests that abortions are common and that effective abortifacients are in general use. In reality, however, innocent women are accused as soon as a lover falls ill, and rather than be thought murderers, they often give him medicine purporting to be a portion of the abortion mixed with sand to be used as a cure.

753 Disease and healing are in the last resort connected with the guardian-
 769 ship of the ancestors. If they are annoyed and relax their vigilance, their descendants may be rendered susceptible to disease, or medicines used cannot have their full effect. Ancestors, however, do not merely ward off disease or assist cure; they also actively cause illness. The crying all day of a baby may be due to the spirit of a grandfather pinching it in order that it should be given his name; sore eyes in children are often, and in adults sometimes, attributed to ancestors; barrenness or difficult birth is laid at their door, and sometimes they seize the whole body of a person because they wish to 'possess' him. But ancestors never cause death: even if at first an illness is said to be due to them, should death supervene, it is attributed to witches. Complaints of living relatives, especially of the father's sister, may also cause illness.

754 By far the most important of all causes of ill-health, however, is the evil work of witches and sorcerers. Certain illnesses, such as *khileso*, are characteristic of sorcery and can be contracted in no other manner. But any disease may be caused by witchcraft and witches may avail themselves of the opportunity offered by any minor illness to enter and aggravate it. Diagnosis depends on the course of the illness. Dysentery is regarded as due to natural causes; but should it not respond to treatment or should the patient suspect an enemy, a witch will be implicated. During the 1938 smallpox epidemic, the head of a district which was more hardly hit than its neighbours called a meeting of residents. Men declared, 'Smallpox kills people here; they merely get ill and recover elsewhere. There is a witch in our midst.' Money was collected, three men sent to a diviner, and, in the end, two women were accused. A specialized cause of illness is legitimate vengeance-magic used against theft and called *khidoba*, which makes the finger of the thief swell up or the stolen goat bleat in his belly.

753 It must not be imagined that the Lovedu do not recognize a large number of diseases as natural. Many illnesses 'just come'. Such are all minor ailments like coughs, colds, stomach disorders, and also other more serious diseases like dysentery and malaria. Too much beer is

known to affect the stomach, many kinds of spinach to cause diarrhoea. Epidemics of smallpox, measles, coughs are thought to be brought by 'wind' (*phcfo e dñle*) and steps may be taken to combat them by sprinkling with medicines the inmates of the village. Usually an epidemic 'just comes', but on occasion one hears that a witch has 'sent' the wind. Ancestors, too, are thought to exercise some controlling influence over wind; in most libations they are asked, 'Prevent for us these winds'—that is, as we might phrase it in our prayers, 'Guard us from disease.' Diseases are never classified as natural or non-natural solely according to their nature or symptoms. Any natural illness may also be 'sent' and, though natural death is recognized as possible, in practice those closely affected always attribute death to witchcraft or sorcery, though outsiders may give other reasons and some even say of an old man dying, 'The gods have called him to rest.' Of the thirty deaths, including a number of old people, that came to our notice, none were, however, thought to be natural. Contagiousness (*hu fedela*) of certain diseases, such as venereal diseases, leprosy, whooping cough, measles, is recognized, and it is known that consumption may be transmitted by parents to their children, as one of its names, *lehofpla la tata-mulgo* (cough of the family father) signifies.

There must, of course, be a body of professional men and women trained in and practising the art and science of medicine, but there are also many who have an extensive knowledge of home remedies. This is not unexpected in a society in which ordinary mortals live close to, and know a great deal about, nature. Every one is familiar with plants and their properties, which is one of the bases of pharmacology, with the meagre conceptions of anatomy and physiological relations, and with much of the intricate system of causation of disease. There are many men and women who know some special medicines or types of treatment, inherited usually from father, mother, or spouse, and kept secret, not because the knowledge is a source of material benefit, for the remedies are generally given free, but because it lends some recognition and prestige. Mamutho, despite all our efforts, divulged her medicine for inflamed eyes to us only as a parting gift. Madinji treats sprains and fractures; Khiebz specializes in mutual inoculation of the newly wed; and Khapani knows roots for dysentery. These are herbalists, not doctors, but some herbalists are so well-known for the efficacy of a medicine they have that even diviners send patients to them. Knowledge of these remedies, however important, does not make one a doctor (*Daga*): that appellation is accorded only to those who are initiated bone-throwers or as herbalists have achieved general recognition as dispensers of many medicines and treatments. Muhale's wife, though no bone-thrower, is a good midwife and wields expertly a blood-letting awl. But a herbalist, even if called *Daga*, remains *Daga-tshubya*, a doctor without horns (power), because he does not divine; he can prescribe for recognized diseases, but he cannot diagnose in other cases for which the divining dice are necessary. From our point of view, the herbalist diagnoses and prescribes along scientific lines; to the Native he is a novice unable to deal with witches or the more serious diseases.

CHAPTER XIII

THE ROLE OF THE ANCESTORS

Ancestral caprices and complaints and rites to appease them—the universe of the ancestors a replica of the everyday world—relations of magic, morality, and religion—possession by spirits as a religion and socio-psychological phenomenon.

NATURE spirits and hero-gods have no place in the Lovedu scheme of things. There is, however, Khuzwane, the creator, who made all things, including men, and left his footprints on certain rocks in the north when these rocks were new and soft. But no one knows what has happened to him and no one ever thinks of him. The gods of the Lovedu are their ancestors, deceased fathers and mothers who guard one in death as they did in life. Each family has its own ancestors, and religious observances are thus peculiarly a family concern.

Ancestors have various attributes. They are one's protectors and no harm can befall one unless they, the ancestors, are neglectful. Witches, powerful as they are, can neither enter the village nor cause sickness without their connivance; hence the procedure in divination, even in the clearest case of witchcraft, of inquiring whether the spirits should be appeased. Disease cannot enter nor epidemics break out if only the ancestors are watchful enough and well-disposed. Again and again one finds this idea expressed in prayers; 'Protect us from epidemics [winds]', they say; while the queen in a prayer at her harvest ceremony put it even more positively: 'As regards life, we have been very well, but now we are being killed by that epidemic which you have allowed to come', referring to smallpox. There can be no success without the co-operation of the ancestors. Medicine cannot help nor doctors heal if the ancestors are not with one. This idea, reminiscent of our 'By the will of God', is expressed in the phrase, 'We do not say our doctor, [will heal]; we say our doctor and the ancestors'. It appears also in a prayer we heard on behalf of an absent son working in town, when a goat, dedicated to his grandmother (father's mother), who had made him ill two years before, was being given the new corn: 'Here is the child; here he is, mother. We ask that you let him be happy and cool (give him health). Tell all the other spirits [certain names mentioned], and we who remain, we say our thing with the gods.'

The phrase '*vadimo lalane*' (spirits, sleep) which rounds off so many prayers, and the constant fear of waking up (*hu dzosa*) the ancestors, causing them to stand (*hu ema*) and cause trouble, appear at first as a peculiar contradiction, as though people do not wish their gods to be watchful. The term *lala* is, however, idiomatic, expressing peace, things being as they should be, as in the phrase, '*Ha va mulao; shago la lala*' (There was order; the country slept), implying that the rains were good and all was well; while *hu dzosa* in this sense means stirring to anger rather than waking up from sleep.

The ancestors are responsible for the fertility of the crops. True, nothing could grow without rain, for which the queen is responsible and

769 What sort of person are you who do not live happily with your people?
 182 To-day all your children have gathered here. They have come to see you
 781 given corn. And to-morrow, when they depart, don't let there be a
 single one who remains troubled. Don't seize them, they are your chil-
 dren.' The difference between a spirit and the very old is not great, for
 [588] an aged person is sometimes even referred to as 'our god' (*mudimo wetsu*)
 and his displeasure during life may be 'seen in the dice' as the cause of
 illness or, after death, be avenged upon those who have angered him. An
 old wife of the queen, who had long been ailing, sent her a message saying,
 'Unless you give me ox liver, I'll never die, but keep on troubling people.'
 The queen, notoriously averse from slaughtering cattle for meat, neverthe-
 less complied with this request, because it came from so old a woman.

769 Living relatives, even if not old, but because of the social implications
 182 of their close relationship, may by conscious or even unconscious
 753 (repressed) displeasure in their hearts cause illness. When Ramatiti's
 788 daughter was about to set out for her new home, her mother, quite un-
 expectedly and without the previous knowledge of any one, took some
 water and squirted (*hu phasa*) it on the ground near the shrine, saying,
 'You people of ours, I myself, mother of the girl, *phasa* lest they say I
 remained with a dissatisfied heart.' By intimating that she had no grievance,
 she tried to safeguard herself from being, at some future date,
 found in the dice as the cause of her daughter's barrenness. Unconscious
 grievances are recognized as working like our so-called repressed com-
 plexes. If the dice assign an illness, say barrenness, to a person who has
 no conscious complaint, he must nevertheless *phasa*, but his prayer will
 be, 'Don't say when you [the ancestors] seize her womb that it is I'
 (meaning, do not attribute your being 'stirred up' to dissatisfaction in my
 heart); or he may say, 'If it is I, let the child be well' (meaning, as I am
 unaware that I am the cause and do not wish to be, let the child recover).
Hu phasa in these circumstances recognizes psychological principles that
 have been clearly formulated only in the twentieth century. If one has a
 grievance one prays, 'Why is it that you rise up on my account? If it is
 I, I say, let them give me such-and-such a thing [e.g. beer of reconcilia-
 tion] and you gods do not "be after" it' (cause further trouble about it).

781 As the gods have human attributes, 'worship' is not characterized by
 humility or formality. Even at the most important offerings you may find
 it difficult to catch the words of the officiator amid the talking and laughter
 of the onlookers. But you will probably hear him say, 'It is not water;
 truly it is beer', or 'It is not just *mabudu* (light beer); it is real beer',
 when he pours out flour and water and, you may see, as we once did, how
 he winks at his friends who smile at the deception. The asking of a
 favour from the gods with beer is patterned on everyday conceptions of
 reciprocity. You sometimes definitely state in your prayer, 'We give to
 you that you may give her [the patient] life.' Religion is cheerful; at the
 harvest offering the gods come to drink and be merry with you, and the
 idea of solemn communion with the gods for the uplifting of the soul,
 found in higher religions, is absent.

771 The relation of religion and morality is too large a subject for discussion
 here, for both concepts are different from ours. Their relation is not

771 The form in which it is found is different from that among Shangana-
 794 Tonga and lent itself to ready incorporation into Lovedu religion.
 177 Among Shangana-Tonga, the possessing spirit is regarded as a foreign
 spirit from some outside tribe; among the Lovedu it is an ancestor who
 may, like any ancestor, demand the usual shrine or dedicated animal.
 The cult is not accepted by all and the royal family deprecate it as foreign
 and as detracting from their prestige. Its noisiness and showiness, though
 incongruous with the traditional reserve and lack of display, makes a
 popular appeal in these more insecure days.

794 A spirit entering a person causes illness and the first object of the cult
 753 is directed at curing the illness, so that initiation is regarded as thera-
 peutic. Long-continued illness of a patient, which will yield to no curative
 treatment, will be diagnosed as due to an ancestral spirit 'pressing him
 down', because it wants to manifest itself in him. The symptoms are
 never very definite: Mashishimali was 'ill all over the body' and suffered
 from swollen legs which five different doctors had tried unsuccessfully
 to cure; Mamolatlala was weak and ailing after the birth of her first child.
 The symptoms are neither violent, like the running amuck which accom-
 panies *ukuthwasa* among the Nguni, nor of a specifically nervous nature.

[828] Epilepsy, which is common, bears no relation to possession, and any
 peculiar behaviour is more liable to be attributed to witchcraft than to the
 spirits. It is believed that a possessed person after death likes in turn to
 manifest itself in some descendant and there is a tendency for possession
 to run in families. In one family three sisters and their mother were all
 possessed. Sometimes, especially where others in the family are possessed,
 a person does not even get ill; he just becomes possessed when people
 are singing or dancing in the manner of the cult. Contact with certain
 localities or people associated with possession is often sufficient. Thus it
 is said that, should one be among the Sekhwasha in Portuguese East
 Africa, who become possessed in a manner different from the Lovedu,
 one risks becoming possessed by merely picking up something dropped
 by a member of that tribe or eating the fruit of the fig, *mudomma* (*Diospy-
 ros n.espiliformis*), or *muncbcbcb* (*Cassia petersiana*).

794 Once it is known that a person is being 'pressed down' by some spirit
 755 wishing to manifest itself, a *lelpo* doctor, himself possessed and skilled
 in dealing with the possessed, is called to cure the patient. This is done,
 not by exorcism, but by rites designed to enable the spirit to come and
 make known its wishes along legitimate channels, known in the cult.
 For the spirits that possess people are not evil spirits to be expelled; they
 are the ancestors whom one worships, and their desire occasionally to
 manifest themselves through some living relative is comparable to that
 impulse towards life that makes them desire shrines, dedicated animals,
 and the perpetuation of their names in their descendants. The method
 by which a spirit is enabled to 'come out' and disclose its identity and the
 possessed person to become the host (*ledala*) of the spirit without being
 ill consists largely of dancing; and on all subsequent occasions when the
 794 spirits manifest themselves they signify their desire to dance.

755 Dancing is the central feature of the cult. The spirits are thought to
 535 enjoy this dancing; when manifesting themselves at festivities of the

It need hardly be said that the reciprocities are not precisely calculated ¹⁸¹ equivalences, nor a series of exactly balanced obligations. People do ⁶²⁶ not consciously think of the long-run result of their behaviour, and they know that social duty done is not always sure of its reward. 'Hard as the axe chops, it cannot eat the honey it extracts', they say to warn those who expect that their efforts will inevitably be rewarded.

The traits, motivations, and attitudes of the Lovedu become more and ¹⁸² more intelligible in the context of the culture as a whole. Whether they are so delicately integrated that we can speak of the culture as an articulated whole, is not a question we shall try to answer. The tribal boundaries are certainly not the boundaries of the culture, which both in its forms and in its attitudes very gradually merges into the culture of a larger area, the limits of which cannot be exactly determined. In view of the increasingly great variations as one goes further and further from the nucleus, the degree of integration can be regarded relatively only to the area one chooses. Lack of integration is often more apparent than real. With regard both to recently introduced elements and to old elements which in their forms or purposes lag behind the changes of the whole culture, the process of integration is proceeding apace, but can never be complete. Thus the cult of possession is shedding those elements that are incongruous with the culture. There are also apparent inconsistencies in the divergent forms allowed in the districts and in principles of behaviour which are contradictory. Thus, for instance, revenge is permitted in the magico-witchcraft sphere, but is outlawed in the legal sphere. We may compare this contradiction to our approval of killing an enemy in war, which is conceived to be in the interests of national security, and our condemnation of killing a fellow man in peace, which is a crime against the security of life. Cultures often segregate contradictory aspects of social experience into logic-tight compartments, and there is no conflict as long as the contradictions can either be kept distinct or be reconciled. If they are embodied in the cultural system, no pressure is brought to compare them, and there is no lack of integration either in the mind of the individual or in the culture.

Men feel insecure chiefly in the face of disease and death, dissension, ¹⁸¹ drought, and the disruptive danger of European intervention. The ⁷⁵³ Lovedu attribute their fears to witchcraft, aggressiveness and quarrelsomeness, wrong burials, and the 'spoiling' of the country by the white man. We shall deal briefly only with two of these sources of insecurity: disease, which is one of the most constant preoccupations of the Lovedu mind, and the European, whose meddling has changed the shape and meaning of life and has upset the standards of right and wrong.

There is abundant reason for the perpetual anxiety about health, for disease is rife and even minor illnesses provide the occasion for the entry of the witch. Read against the background of their imperfect knowledge of anatomy and of the causation of disease, experience warns men that almost anything, from a simple scratch to the dreaded 'coughing disease', may cause death; in every case, not germs and poisons, but witches and sorcerers, may enter the body and take advantage of the weakness of the patient. Disease is combated, and susceptibility to disease is guarded against, at

181 every step in a man's life. The infant is saturated with medicine:
 753 he is made to grow by means of medicine, he is steamed and strengthened, and every upset of the stomach, every sign of disorder, every major change in his life is treated as if it were a grave danger. The child is often inoculated against the 'poisoned shaft', the 'last, fatal arrow' that a malicious enemy might 'hurl' at him. Medicines by anticipation protect those who after their initiation ceremony might be weakened (*hu khuma*) when they resume contact with the world. Even adults in perfect health periodically consult their doctors to discover whether, unknown to them, some one is not planning an attack upon them.

To a European nothing is more amazing than the number of medicines that are tried, rejected, and changed when a man is or supposes that he is ill, unless indeed it is the contradiction that is implied in their pre-occupation with their ailments as contrasted with their care-free attitude to life. The Lovedu are always telling of their illnesses, yet they seem to worry as little about them as the Englishman about the weather, although he can hardly converse without complaining about it. It must, therefore, not be imagined that life is weighed down by this interest in ailments; the Lovedu are seldom really depressed. They do not feel at the mercy of a capricious power, for their safety is ultimately in strong hands. They can use medicine to combat witchcraft and, though death is inevitable, their faith in the superiority of the good forces that they can invoke to control evil remains unshaken; for death is only the occasional triumph of evil, which time and again throughout life is defeated by the power of medicine. The outlook which supports security presupposes an ordered universe in which witchcraft is not merely outlawed, but can be overcome by employing well-recognized techniques.

829 In the face of the danger of the European, the position is entirely
 177 different. The white man is conceived to be part of a world which is antagonistic and incomprehensible; its forces are both disruptive, striking at the very significance of life, and capricious, not amenable to control by any known magical techniques. The projection of the danger upon the supernatural is but one aspect of a far wider conflict between European and Native, conqueror and conquered, perpetuated by divergent outlooks and different cultural configurations.

The conflict is an exceedingly complicated one. There is, firstly, the threat to the security of the Lovedu tribe, a threat that strikes particularly at the position of the queen and at the effectiveness of social mechanisms, causing criminals to multiply, encouraging disrespect for parents and for elders, and weakening the force of the reciprocities. Secondly, in the wider contact of Europeans and Natives attitudes have become vitiated by the antipathies that develop between the group of fellow men and the aliens outside it. The loyalties and trust between those within the group become transformed into hatred and suspicion towards those outside it; in the one case the human capacity for self-sacrifice, in the other case the capacity for selfishness, comes into play. Where the whole value system of the one group clashes with that of the other, antipathies are intensified. Moreover, the differences between the groups coincide with pronounced biological distinctions, such as

855 mother's mother, especially in cases where the next baby has arrived before three or four years have elapsed; and a young motherless child is often sent by his father to his mother's brother's people (where his mother's mother will be) in preference to being handed over to a fellow wife of the mother, for it is generally considered that the mother's people are best able to rear (*hodisa*) a child.

593 A very special relationship exists between a man and his sister, especially his eldest sister, who is or will become the priestess of the family. She is the person who has greatest influence over him, who will be called to reason with him when even his parents are unable to persuade him. The sister whose cattle he used to obtain a wife also has a special interest in his household affairs. This house is the place where she will 'put her things' and make herself at home when visiting her old home; his daughter will one-day marry her son; his wife may run to her or her elder sister if he ill-treats her, whereupon she will remonstrate with her brother or even in extreme cases arrange for permanent protection of such a woman away from her husband.

•[753] The sister's rights are supported by a powerful sanction, for if she 'feels dissatisfied in her heart' owing to bad treatment at the hands of her brother, the ancestors are liable to make his children ill. When this happens, the brother will have to approach his sister humbly to come and end matters, after openly airing her grievances, by interceding with the ancestors on behalf of his children. Not all sisters are, however, in practice able to control and influence their brothers: here, as in all human relationships, much depends on the character and good sense of the parties concerned; and I have seen a 'bad lot' just back from town slap the face of a sister who had been called to remonstrate with him about a loose woman he had brought to his wife's house from town.

413 The clan, if it can be said to exist at all, does so only in a vague way, and there are no functions or usages associated with it. Relatives belong to no clearly marked group but can be traced in ever-widening circles from the individual family just as we trace relationships in our own society. There is no term for clan: *moloko* refers to relatives on both father's and mother's side, while *khoro*, a word most commonly used to denote that portion of any village where the men sit, but also meaning court, clan, or tribe, is too vague in its connota-

THE LOVEDU OF THE TRANSVAAL

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A sister's cattle-providing capacity gives her a pivotal position in the social structure. It is the cattle accruing from her marriage that 'build' a house for her brother and 'beget' children to her lineage. Over this house she has rights that can be legally and mystically enforced. She settles disputes in it, and distributes its possessions when its owner dies. She invokes the gods on its behalf; no one, not even her brother himself (the husband and head of the house), can ill treat the wife of this house without having to reckon with her, and any breach of the marriage relationship is void without her consent. It will be evident that no judgement of the Lovedu courts in regard to a marriage has much chance of being carried out without the assistance and co-operation of this sister. For this and other reasons women are prominent as intermediaries and conciliators in the society. It should also be no surprise that any woman may marry wives, whose children call her 'father'; that many women are kraal heads and some of them the most important districts heads in the country. As chief officiators in offerings and sacrifice women play an important role also in religion.

Structurally the agnatic group, of which the cattle-linked brother is a member, is a minor lineage three to four generations deep, which supplies wives to the lineage into which his sister has married. The obligations of providing wives on the one hand and returning cattle on the other cannot, indeed, be enforced beyond the actual houses concerned and their lineal descendants, but the relationships of reciprocity and the behaviour patterns of helpfulness on the part of the wife-receivers, and of honouring and periodically bringing beer on the part of the wife-providers, are usually extended beyond these houses to the whole minor lineage and, where the relationships have been long established and are kept alive as part of the political structure, they may embrace major lineages five to eight generations deep. The wife-providers are called either maternal uncles (*vanahume*), since a man's mother's brother (*malume*) is ideally his wife's father, or grandparents (*vamukhulu*), since his maternal grandfather is the male representative of his wife's agnatic group (being her paternal grandfather). Conversely, the wife-receivers are called either sons-in-law (*vatsenzi*), because the lineage into which a man's sister marries is also the lineage into which his daughter marries, or *vaguhulu* (grandchildren or sister's sons), a man's sister's son being the same person as his daughter's husband or his father's granddaughter. It should be noted that, even though these wife-providing and wife-receiving lineages are related through marriage, the relationships between them are not merely affinal. The wife-providers and wife-receivers are not merely brothers-in-law but also cognates—wife-providers being maternal uncles and grandparents, and wife-receivers being children of paternal aunts, sisters, or daughters. A man's maternal kin are also his affines, while the maternal kin and sororal affines are merged with the paternal kin.

This merging of various types of kin is perhaps the reason why all four lines of kin—father's father, father's mother, mother's father, mother's

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• 753 mother—are important in ancestor worship. Any of these forebears may seize
769 a man and make him ill, require a dedicated animal or a shrine in his or her
honour, and, in fact, one may find shrines in one village or kraal to kin of
several different lineages. In practice the mother's mother is an ancestor
who most often causes illness in her grandchildren because of her great love
for them.

621 The core of a large kraal or village (20 to 80 huts) is usually the minor
lineage, but there are always also affines and cognates, quite apart from the
spouses of agnatic members of the lineage who themselves are usually cog-
nates. In kraal matters it is by virtue of being not an agnate, but a member
of the kindred (*mulgo*), that a man has a voice. The core of the district is
602 sometimes also the lineage of the district head, but the lineage is not a
634 political group and the influence and authority of its head are not a function
643 of his relationship, agnatic or other, to the people living in the district.
Districts, of which there are 140—with an average area of 1 square mile and
population of 250—are linked to the queen on the pattern of cattle and wife
exchanges. Districts are either held by descendants of one of the original
agnatic lineages of the nuclear ruling group, or they have been allocated to
vasanoni (wives of the queen) or to immigrant alien groups. They all send
wives to the queen, who thereby becomes their son-in-law (*muduhulu*) and,
by allocating them to other district heads and to royal relatives, she becomes
parent-in-law (*ramakhulu*) to the latter. Those lineages of the royal nuclear
group who send wives to the queen are both 'brothers' (agnates) and re-
latives-in-law (affines) to her. The use of the mechanism of the social system
to align groups into reciprocal relations forges a great network of ties diat-
ing from the queen to all strategic points in the society. It was in this way
that large numbers of alien refugees were incorporated into the tribe and
became related to one another. Payments of tribute and services to the
queen are thus looked upon as the fulfilment of kinship obligations, in
return for which the queen not only gives land and protection from enemies,
but also transforms the clouds into rain and so frees men from fear and
uncertainty.

602 Thus the kinship ties that bind subjects to the rain queen are interlocked
with the values and institutions supporting her divinity. The homage in
641 wives—that is paid to her for giving men the blessings of rain, is also the
643 means of forging the network of kinship ties. The kinship ties, again, con-
vert political tribute and services due to the queen into morally sanctioned
ceremonial exchanges between relatives-in-law; and just as there is no need
for military virtues and military organization to deter enemies, since the
queen, merely by withholding rain, can secure the defeat of the foe, so also
there is no need to rely upon force to secure the willing allegiance of sub-
jects who are treated to the beer that they bring, ostensibly as tribute to a
sovereign but in reality as gifts from parents-in-law.

643 The queen is accordingly the pivot of the nodal institutions of the society.
772 The benevolent forces in the universe are, as the Lovedu sometimes
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789 from the supernatural. While anyone who knows a cure for an ailment
755 is manipulating the forces of nature and using *evyaga*, there are doctors
who, by virtue of long training, know many medicines, have learnt how to
divine and have been imbued with additional perspicacity and powers as a
result of a special initiation. Medicine functions by virtue of the properties,
actual or ascribed, of matter; the principles underlying the operation of
medicines assume mechanical cause and effect and even the divining bones
are read according to rule.

756 There are, however, two types of doctor who fall into a different cate-
gory: the *lelpo* doctor, directly possessed and guided by an ancestor spirit,
who largely confines his activities to curing possessed people, and the
magome or 'smeller-out' who is generally a foreigner. People using the
forces of nature for evil purposes are *rabi* (witches and sorcerers) and are
dealt with in another context. *Uyaga*, it will be seen, is the use of imper-
sonal power inherent in matter, which is extracted by the expert (*yaga*) and
applied in the interests of the health and well-being of men; it is also the
exercise of personal qualities or skills, either inherited or acquired through
spirit possession or guidance.

Ancestors

769 Ancestors can influence for good and evil the fortunes only of their own
777 descendants, who in the case of the chief's ancestors are taken to include
the whole tribe. Their control over the forces of nature is not explicitly
formulated; and what is expressly stated is not always confirmed in Lovedu
religious practices. The ancestors are clearly conceived to exercise an over-
all control. A man will always assert that no harm or illness can befall him if
his ancestors are watchful enough, for they have power to ward off all evil
[754] and misfortune. It is said that even witches cannot, without the will of the
ancestors, enter a village or deliver the last fatal blow that kills a man. But
in practice the will of the ancestors either is not interposed, for no ascertain-
able reason, or is ineffective to ward off attacks. If some great sorrow over-
takes a man, it is said that 'his ancestors have had an accident' implying that
he has been temporarily deprived of their protection and is at the mercy of his
[755] enemies. Even medicines are said to be ineffective without the co-operation
of one's ancestors, the conception being not merely that their goodwill is
essential but also that *evyaga* belongs to the ancestors. In fact, however, the
ineffectiveness of medicines is never in any concrete case attributed to the
lack of such co-operation.

769 Ancestors are appealed to and thanked for good crops, fertility, plenty,
777 and all manner of good fortune and success. The desire to be remembered
and given tendance is attributed to them, and they may themselves cause
harm and sickness to descendants who neglect them; but somewhat incon-
sistently a man may with impunity neglect them for many years and give
• 753 them tendance only when misfortune overtakes him. Ancestors may be
approached and propitiated or thanked by means of offerings and prayer

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and the use of *dithugula*, objects such as beads which have once been in their possession; but they can also be constrained by medicine or the properties of matter.

Ancestors are capricious: their complaints as seen in the divining bones are usually about being neglected; but they may cause illness to those they love most in order to receive recognition, have their name perpetuated, or their beads worn. They are said to 'hold' the woman experiencing difficult labour, to afflict children with sore eyes, and even to prevent the queen from making rain. Their complaints need imply no omission or neglect on the part of the afflicted descendant, but merely some special desire that could not have been anticipated. The degree of either neglect or tendance bears no relation to their satisfaction or dissatisfaction, since the ascription of misfortune to the ancestors is always *ex post facto*: hence the paradox that a family that is assiduous in its tendance of the ancestors may suffer more ill health and misfortune than one that has neglected the ancestors for a long time.

Dithugula are instrumental in controlling nature not only indirectly through the ancestors but also directly by virtue of the substances used in them. A *thugula* may be a shrine to an ancestor (male or female), an animal dedicated to him, old beads or objects of iron to which, owing to their having once been in his possession, power to influence him is attributed. But a *thugula* may also be any charm of herbs concocted by a doctor and worn for protective purposes. The queen's rain-medicines are *dithugula*. The most important religious ceremony of the year, the annual offering of beer to ancestors as thanksgiving for the harvest, is also called *thugula*. *Dithugula* thus constitute a category of objects, usually closely associated with the ancestors (though they may be made by a doctor), through which they may be approached, and which have special virtue particularly to give health and protection against ill and epidemics.

Dithugula are found in every lineage which, through its shrines, dedicated animals, and charms, secures the general welfare of its members. The queen's *dithugula*, her rain-medicines, sacred objects, and shrines through which she intercedes with the royal ancestors, are the ultimate symbols of her power and the safeguards of the welfare of the country; and just as certain medicines (*diphabe*), which are used in shrines or offerings to make the ancestors forget their complaints, are pegged round the village by the paternal aunt or sister of its head to protect it against witches, so also the queen may *thugula* the whole country by sending boys to peg medicated sticks on its boundaries as a protection against evil, particularly epidemics that might threaten it from outside.

The queen's control

The basis of the queen's control over nature is her divinity. So bound up is she with nature that her very emotions affect the rain. The complex of royal institutions includes the conceptions that she must be without

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was not announced for a year, while, as the body decomposed, such vital ingredients of the rain-medicine as the skin and body-dirt were carefully collected; after the announcement a period of anarchy often supervened as rival claimants marshalled their armed forces for the struggle for the throne. At the end of this year of mourning all the fires of the country were put out with purificatory rain-medicine (*mafago*) from the official keeper at the capital.

This fire rite symbolizes purification of the country as well as a transition from one order to another. At any time when the country is not right (*naha a s'lige*), as when there is severe drought, the fires are put out 'to usher in a new year' (i.e. a new order or period of operative forces). But the fire rite also symbolizes the means through which the allegiance of subjects and the authority of the queen are asserted. Finally, the beating out of the fires with cooling medicine is part of a complex of practices connected with heat and cold, symbolizing respectively dysphoria and euphoria. The 'earth is hot' (*maew a fesa*) on the death of the queen and a new cosmic order has to be inaugurated by cooling it in preparation for the new rain-maker.

After the fire rite there follows the divine identification of the successor by the rite of opening the door. The rival claimants, one of whom, chosen by the inner royal council and the deceased queen, has been secretly prepared for his office, pass the hut in which the queen has died. They announce their identity to the spirit of the deceased, lightly touching the door of the hut, which yields to the chosen successor.

In and around the inner secret council where the choice is actually made centre serious tensions, not only between the present ruler and the heir-elect for whose sake and succession she must poison herself, apparently not always willingly, but also between those who depend for their position and prestige upon the patronage of one or the other. The 'chosen' heir always goes to live far away, ostensibly to conceal his or her identity but in reality also owing to a serious conflict with the reigning sovereign.¹

For the regulation of cosmic forces the queen relies not only on her divinity but also upon the royal rain-medicines and, in the last resort, on the agreement of the royal ancestor spirits. To prevent the weakening of the rain-medicine it must be revitalized by being given the first termites and first-fruits each year, and occasionally parts of a black sheep or, in the old days, a human being.

Rain-charms are liable to weaken (*fig'akela*) or become defiled (*khuma*) by certain deviations from the normal course of nature unless special precautions are taken. Twins, babies cutting their upper teeth before their lower, women dying in pregnancy, abortions and miscarriages, men dying from *fiets*, a deadly coughing disease believed to be contracted by having sex intercourse with a woman who has had a miscarriage or abortion or whose child has died before weaning—all these are deviations which contaminate the earth, causing it to be 'hot', and therefore have to be buried in wet soil or

¹ Males are not debarred from succession; indeed the early rulers were all men. But a definite preference for women rulers seems now to be firmly established.

171 The *gomama* drums are no longer used by the queen to appeal to the
 778 ancestors for rain, but she permits boys from the royal village to attend
 881 *gomama* initiation ceremonies held occasionally, with her permission, by an
 outsider. The *gomama* concept, despite the support it gives to the mystical
 attributes of the queen, appears to represent a conceptual pattern that is
 autonomous and more fully developed in some neighbouring tribes, where
 the moments of the agricultural year were signalized by the sounding of the
 drums which were thought to bring rain and fertility, to bless the crops and
 cattle, and to safeguard the country from disease and enemies. In some
 tribes today the cult is a recent innovation in the form of initiation schools
 managed by outsiders who have their own drums and *zwidjani* visitors
 from tribes where the cult is better known.

Evil and how to avoid it

761 It has been shown that the Lovedu conceive the order of nature as
 772 something essentially man-controlled through the power of medicine and
 821 magic (*vuyaga*), through the ancestors, through the divinity and powers of
 the queen, and through the mysterious forces associated with *digama*. The
 seasons and the rain have to be established by the queen for the crops to
 prosper; the baby 'grows by medicines' which guard it from harm and
 sickness and imbue it with health and strength; adulthood is achieved
 through initiations and *digama*; and over and above all, there is the watchful
 care of the gods. The natural order accordingly can and must be manipu-
 lated by utilizing benevolent and nullifying malignant forces, in order to
 further man's good fortune or to prevent evil from befalling him.

772 The Lovedu have elaborated some interesting concepts of impersonal
 811 evil powers which are concentrations of forces brought about by certain
 821 concatenations of conditions or events. These concepts are found over a
 much wider area, but have received special emphasis among the Lovedu.
 To them the ultimate good is rain. Rain is regarded as not merely the
 material source of life and happiness and the physical basis of man's sense
 of security; it is also a symbol of spiritual well-being and a manifestation
 that the social order is operating smoothly. Hence coolness denotes a state
 of euphoria: man and matter to be in order and to function properly have
 to be kept cool; angry ancestors must be cooled by means of medicine; even
 witches can be cooled and so made to forget their evil purposes. On the
 other hand, heat as the antithesis of the main basis of man's security, the
 cooling, life-giving rain, is conceived as a destructive force leading to a
 state of dysphoria.

●753 'Heat' is a concept suggested by the physical properties of heat; it may
 772 sometimes be sensed, for example, as an important factor in fever, one of
 811 the most prevalent illnesses. But actually its operation is inferred from con-
 821 ditions of which 'heat' is clearly the cause, such as droughts and the desic-
 cation of the crops. Here the generation of heat is ascribed to the effect upon
 the earth of disturbances of the regular course of nature by the burial in it

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of twins, abortions, miscarriages, and women dying in childbirth, or by the cosmic chaos resulting from the death of the chief. 'Hot blood' is one of the commonest causes of illness. *Lewu* (burning) is primarily a physiological condition of a woman resulting from abortion and it may be transmitted to the man who has intercourse with her, who then contracts the dreaded and fatal *glere*, a coughing disease considered to be quite different from consumption (*lefika*). 'Heat' affects the physical potency of medicines and charms, the mental repose of the gods, the mysterious powers of *dithugula*, and the welfare of the whole country. It stirs (*dzusa*) the gods to anger and it activates the criminal propensities of witches.

'Heat' and 'cold', then, are all-important conceptual categories which are brought into relation with the functioning of the physical, mental, and emotional forces in man, in the ancestors, and in nature. Wherever 'heat' is considered to be generated, the proper antidote is the administration of 'cooling' medicines, i.e. substances which have the property of counteracting the heat or soothing the burning. The remedy is to put right what is wrong (*hu logisa*), to secure a return to normal conditions by cooling agencies. If the whole country is in an abnormal condition (*a e lege*, literally, is not right) all the fires must be sprinkled with *mufugo* medicine (*hu fuga* means to blow upon with a cool breeze). Sources of heat to the earth, e.g. twins, abortions, must be buried in wet soil; ancestor spirits aroused by 'heat' (anger) have to be calmed by squirting water (*hu phasa*) on objects once in their possession or over their graves. Cooling medicines likewise counteract that burning of the fingers which constrains witches to do evil, while charms protecting the village against witches are often called *masithyo* (things causing coolness). In all these cases the active reagent in the medicines is some substance having 'cooling' properties, such as the river stones guarding the entrance to villages or built into shrines of ancestors, the succulent bulbs used in the rite for the removal of the 'dirt' (*khutshila*) of death, the great overhanging fig-trees shading shrines, the green undigested chyme from a sheep or goat's alimentary canal that figures prominently in ritual. Much medical ingenuity goes into the manufacture of powders and decoctions which, owing to their special cooling properties, will counteract heat; and it is not surprising that the Lovedu way of curing malaria is to seek drugs that will drive out the 'heat' by means of profuse perspiration. 'Heat' is most commonly caused by abnormalities associated with the procreation and the actual or threatened destruction of human life—hence the close association of 'heat' with sex, reproduction, and death.

Another malignant force, *muridi* (shadow), is conceived as evil cast by certain conditions. It infects those upon whom it falls, but if they are healthy, the effect upon them is invisible and harmless, though they become carriers who may transmit the contagion to others with whom they come into contact, especially those whose resistance is weak, such as new-born babies and sick people. 'Shadow' thus explains the spread of contagion, not by direct contact but through an intermediate unaffected carrier. *Muridi* is

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783 not a real or mystical shadow in our sense of the term, but an evil and con-
 753 tagious force conceptualized, on the analogy of a shadow, as an invisible
 counterpart of certain conditions. The sources of 'shadow' are such con-
 ditions or events as death, activities connected with human reproduction,
 including sex intercourse, the early stages of pregnancy, birth of twins, mis-
 carriage (regarded as death), women during confinement, irregular appear-
 ance of the teeth, e.g. upper incisor before lower or molar before incisor.
 'Shadow' is accordingly connected with many of the same kind of irregu-
 larities as generate 'heat', but it appears to be differentiated as an indepen-
 dent concept for the purpose of dealing with its effects on the health of
 people who are peculiarly susceptible to defilement.

783 Precautions are taken to protect the sick against the influence of *muridi*.
 753 A sick person is smeared with medicines or quarantined like a new-born
 834 child by means of a medicated stick placed across the entrance to his hut to
 warn off carriers of 'shadow' and counteract the 'shadow' of anyone un-
 aware of his condition. If there is an epidemic in a village and the general
 vitality and resistance consequently are lowered, people may be told to re-
 frain from sex intercourse lest *muridi* make the illness worse. In the small-
 pox epidemic of 1938 people cohabiting were said to have the disease in a
 worse form than others. When a child is ill, its parents refrain from sex
 intercourse. A warrior who slept with his wife the night before battle would
 be easy prey to the enemy. A man sleeping with his wife may not approach
 a slaughtered animal before its stomach has been pierced nor help skin it
 without first smearing his hands with (usually cooling) medicine, lest *muridi*
 affect the meat and cause stomach trouble (*makhuma*) to those eating it.
 [826] Children whose teeth appear irregularly (*leshaga*) are full of *muridi* and
 were killed in the old days. But today they are treated by a doctor and have
 to be careful never to bite others, for the wound will not heal and there
 is always difficulty in obtaining the necessary antidote, namely, scrapings
 from the teeth of the *leshaga*. Cross-roads and river fords are secondary
 sources of *muridi* since the 'shadow' carried by unsuspecting hosts infects
 [843] these places. For this reason pregnant women are not supposed to go on long
 journeys from home.

783 *Muridi* is a much more limited concept than 'heat'; it is invoked mainly
 753 to account for the aggravation of illness or the susceptibility to illness or other
 injury of persons contacting defilement. It does not affect the country
 generally, and it furnishes an alternative to witchcraft as an explanation of
 the aggravation of ailments or the failure of illnesses to yield to ordinary
 remedies.

Muridi in a more virulent form is called *leridi* (ominous or menacing
 shadow), which infects a warrior who has killed an enemy and who is in
 grave danger of becoming mad or very quarrelsome unless purified. An
 allied concept is that of *letala* (sinister track) derived from the idea that,
 if a woman is cohabiting with two men one of whom gets ill, the track of the
 other, should he approach near or within earshot of the sick person, will

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cause the latter to die by aggravating his illness. Similarly a man's mistress must avoid coming near the hut of his wife when she is ill or in childbirth, lest the mistress's sinister track endanger the life of the wife. 783 753

Makhuma (from *hu khuma*, to mix) is a concept which uses the analogy of contamination by mixture or contact to account for physical weakening, wasting away or enfeeblement (*hu figchela*). The situations that constitute the chief source of *makhuma* are critical transitions in the life of the individual as well as serious crises such as severe illnesses. The evil contaminates or infects the person who has undergone the change or who, in the case of death, comes into contact with its baneful influence. He seems to suffer from loss of vitality, or to become dislocated because of the change in his condition.

The measures taken to combat *makhuma* are in the first instance preventive. Strengthening medicines are administered or inoculated to fortify the individual by anticipation; thereafter, under isolating conditions that are gradually relaxed, an adjustment is made to the new situation. Thus novices in the various initiations are medically treated in anticipation of their susceptibility to *khuma* on entering their new condition. Babies are fortified (*hu thunna*, to be helped) by scarification and steaming before they leave the hut of confinement; kin and other inmates of the village must after a death be readjusted by means of medicines and other treatment to the change caused by the death lest they *khuma*. *Makhuma* also affects possessed people who fail to use medicine with the first-fruits. A man will *khuma* if he cohabits with a woman after the death of her child unless she has first been medically purified, and she must also be careful not to give food to other children before treatment lest they get ill and die. If one baby dies, any illness its successor may have is liable to be diagnosed as due to *makhuma*. Even cattle may *khuma* after a death in the village or if a woman enters the cattle fold. 751 783 [304] 846 [768]

By logical extension and the invocation of a further series of presuppositions the concept is applied to the bones of a diviner, which are liable to *khuma* (lose their diagnostic powers) every month—they are said to 'see their moons'—or when used to divine about a death, and must be washed in medicine before being used again. Similarly the queen's rain-medicine will *khuma* unless given the first termites and first-fruits, or when people neglect observances connected with the burial of those who are 'hot'. 783 787 789

The evils differently conceptualized in the notions of 'heat', *makhuma* and 'shadow' have this in common: they are all instances of a ritual impurity, generated by certain states or conditions, not because of their morally reprehensible nature but because of their abnormality or their relation to reproductive processes or critical changes in life. 'Heat' and 'shadow' appear to be different aspects of the same kind of ritual impurity, but 'shadow' is dangerous only to someone whose resistance is low because of illness or immaturity, while 'heat' may have deleterious effects not only on healthy people but on natural phenomena, on ancestor spirits, and on 783

783 charms or *digoma*. *Makhuma* which arises from critical transitions causes mainly stomach trouble and general debility in men and cattle; but it also causes weakening of the mystical powers concentrated in sacred objects. These ritual forces do not strike down the guilty person: it is, for example, not the husband who will be revenged if the adulterer approaches the hut of his wife; or when a woman has procured an abortion, it is not she but her innocent lover who will be affected with *dere*, the most dreaded disease among the Lovedu. The harmful effects of all these forms of impurity are not sanctions against the acts or events causing the impurity, but sanctions for taking the necessary precautions to remove the impurity and prevent it from spreading to others, or from causing some calamity not necessarily affecting the guilty person. And, as so often happens in Lovedu society, it is generally *ex post facto*, and as an explanation of some illness or evil that these conceptions are invoked and steps are taken to put things right.

784 The concatenations of actions and conditions that must be avoided lest they bring about misfortune and evil to men are wider than what is included in the conceptions of 'heat', *muridi*, and *makhuma*. Many things or natural objects brought into relation with men have evil consequences and must be avoided: they are taboo (*hu ila*). Burning a certain kind of wood in the village causes quarrels; working in the fields the day after the first rain is taboo, not sanctioned by a penalty but the breach of which is a bane (*lesola*) that may portend evil. The breach of these taboos is disapproved but leads to no organized reaction or public indignation even where it affects the welfare of all, as in the case of a wrong burial. A man who sleeps with his wife while she is still suckling a child may thereby cause the death of his child; but it is his own foolish and inconsiderate conduct that causes the mother's breast to *khuma* (become polluted and weakened), and it is not the concern of outsiders. He is a fool rather than criminal.

753 Many things in nature are recognized as directly affecting man adversely; various foods and drinks cause stomach troubles; poisonous weeds may kill cattle which, like men, occasionally die of old age; many minor illnesses are attributed to natural causes, e.g. one may contract malaria by walking in the dew in the early morning. Epidemics may be brought about naturally by the air or wind (*phiso*). 'Ward off from us these winds' is a constant plea in prayers to the ancestors. Hot, dry winds which drive away rain-bearing clouds or dissolve them in thunderstorms or gales are thought to be specially detrimental to the rain, and it is the duty of the ancestors to keep away such winds. Even anxiety or worry wears a man down (*hu sega mutho a hom-chwa*, lit., scrapes a man thin). A woman who is prone to break her pots is not bewitched; she has *khifayisa*, a natural propensity for breaking, which can be cured by medicine.

777 The Lovedu also have the conception of natural accident (*gozi*) and of luck (*leshuto*), though bad luck is sometimes attributed to breach of obligations to kin, to malicious gossip, or to the misconduct in one's absence of one's wife.

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An omen or bane (*lesola*) presages death or disaster, but it may itself be the cause of the evil that follows. An owl hooting outside a hut, cats crying plaintively (not caterwauling) at night, presage disaster, for cats have uncanny insight; a mountain snake can be a *lesola*, and so can a *leshaga*, i.e. a person whose teeth have appeared in the wrong order. A person will *tola* another, i.e. cause misfortune or death to descend upon a member of the latter's family, by swearing badly at him, especially if the words are out of all proportion to the offence or provocation.

These concepts of natural luck, accident, and omens are thus also linked with human relationships. Good relations with near relatives may bring you good luck, bad relations, especially with your father or father's sister, bad luck or illness to your children. In fact any man who despises the great, particularly his father, will, it is said, see him in the bones as the cause of his misfortune, especially if the old man dies before a reconciliation has been effected. An old man's scolding or curse is an omen (*vusola*) which portends and causes misfortune to a near relative of the person scolded, and the grievance of one's sister or father's sister, even if it is unconscious, generates a force (*mahava*) which brings illness upon one's children and which can be neutralized only by a religious rite. The exact relation between *mahava* and the ancestors is not very clear. The Lovedu conceive *mahava* as following automatically from the bad relationship between important kin. Yet reconciliation, which removes the source of the *mahava*, is not enough for putting matters right. It is the ancestors that must remove the illness at the request of the aggrieved party.

Witchcraft and Sorcery (Vulxi)

The evils that have so far been mentioned are either inherent in nature or only vaguely brought into relation with the conduct and relationships between men. Their effects except in a few cases are mild, rarely ending in death. In a completely different category is the greatest and most devastating source of evil *vulxi* (witchcraft and sorcery), brought about directly by man. *Vulxi* is, by Lovedu conceptions, always due to the conscious, evil practices of man and is directed at persons he has reason to hate.¹ *Vulxi* is morally reprehensible, and witches and sorcerers are the arch enemies of society. The concept of *vulxi* explains evil in terms of the malicious wickedness in men's hearts; it is criminality incarnate in man. The term *vulxi* covers both witchcraft and sorcery; nevertheless the Lovedu make a clear distinction between witchcraft (*vulxi eya vusiu*—night witchcraft) and sorcery (*vulxi eya matsiare*—day witchcraft). The night-witch uses sinister inherited powers which extend beyond the ordinary course of nature. The sorcerer uses the natural, known powers of medicine for anti-social ends. Witchcraft implies possession of power to do evil transcending the under-

¹ Neighbouring Venda and Tsonga conceive the witch as constrained to evil by heredity but unconscious of his own evil acts.

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that befall men, whether sickness, barrenness, lightning that strikes men, huts, or cattle, failure of an individual's crops, or death of his children, are caused by the hatred and envy in men's hearts. 777

There is no greater fear than the fear that gnaws at the heart of a Lovedu who suspects he has been bewitched. Yet he is not impotent before its onslaught. By ascribing destructive forces, disease, and other evil to witchcraft and sorcery, and at the same time believing in the power of magic (*ruyaga*) to counteract witchcraft, a Lovedu is able to feel that he is master of his own fate. Evil in the world on this theory becomes intelligible, not arbitrary and capricious. This is an ordered and just world in which evil, being held to express itself largely in witchcraft and sorcery, is outlawed and criminal, and in which good ultimately triumphs. And if this projective system affords a convenient theory of failure, it also stresses the virtue of goodwill for human welfare. 754 789

Relationships of Man to Man

That the greatest source of all evil should be the envy and jealousies in men's hearts is in keeping with the emphasis everywhere in Lovedu social life on the importance of good relationships between man and man. Bad relations and non-fulfilment of obligations between kin may, as we have seen, cause not only bad luck, through ancestral displeasure, but even illness, through the automatic force of *mahava*. The dissatisfaction in a mother's heart, whether conscious or not, in connexion with her daughter's marriage may cause her sterility, just as the complaints of a sister may be the cause, as seen in the bones, of the illness of her brother's children. The queen's emotions, too, affect the rain and it becomes important, therefore, for the welfare of all that she should not be sad or displeased. 829 777 753 • [82]

Dominating relations between individuals and between groups is the whole pattern of mutuality, co-operation, and long-run reciprocities in the social structure. 'One leg cannot dance a *gasha*' say the Lovedu; co-operation is essential for the tasks of life. Security is bound up with the mutualities of kin, cognatic, agnatic, and affinal. In a society where wealth cannot be accumulated, it is not surprising that men's efforts should be directed towards building up and maintaining through generations links of marriage and kinship with all that these imply. These reciprocities in the society are motivated by unavoidable necessity but they are long-run ones. There is no weighing up of one service against another, nor any attempt to seek prestige by lavishness. Moreover, it is sharing and helpfulness not the display of one's generosity that is wanted. 181

Side by side with the emphasis on give and take, the society provides in such a manner for the place and achievement of individuals that competitiveness is limited and aggressive traits are outlawed. The immediate goals of individuals are divergent, and men are not conceived as striving against one another for the attainment of the same end. There is no special prestige

181 in the use of motor traffic. Are not people more important than speed? The need for even a chief to respect the wishes of his subjects upon whom he depends for a following is summed up in the saying, *Uuhosi gi vatho*, 'chieftainship is people'.

577 The qualities or virtues that are stressed, then, in the moral code of the Lovedu are moderation and temperance, compromise and agreement, humility, respect for the personality and rights of others. Courage is not rated very high in this non-military society. Perseverance is often enjoined and is especially necessary in the monotonous tasks of hoeing, carrying heavy loads of wood, walking up steep mountain slopes; but it is never carried out with the single-mindedness that a European might expect. Theft is condemned and there are ritual sanctions against it. If the object stolen has been magically treated, for example, a painful sore will develop on the finger which defies treatment until guilt has been confessed and restitution agreed to. 'Don't steal, always beg (*hobela*) for what you want', children are exhorted. But theft is not a problem in this economically undifferentiated society, though nowadays cases of theft, even if extremely rarely, do come before the tribal courts. Drunkenness is bad only if it leads to neglect of duties or fights and quarrels. To be drunk is in itself no disgrace, it is merely pleasant and perhaps exhilarating, not a condition to be ashamed of. [273] Indeed everyone looks forward to the *murula* season when all become slightly intoxicated from the cider made out of the fruits.

Right conduct is relative always to the human situation and morality is oriented not from any absolute standards of honesty or truth but from the social good in each situation. Conduct that promotes smooth relationships, that upholds the social structure, is good; conduct that runs counter to smooth social relationships is bad. Courtesy and the respect due to age or seniority are thus of greater importance than truth. A son-in-law who, tired of always being imposed upon by his wife's father, truthfully signified his unwillingness to help him by providing a goat would be guilty, in view of the special mutualities between families related by marriage, of unpardonable behaviour which might jeopardize his marriage. The correct procedure is to agree to help but to be always 'still looking for it' when approached for the goat. It took us a long time to discover that the right way to deal with incessant begging was not to refuse however politely, but to say 'I have none' or 'It is not mine to give'. The polite lie even if palpable is better calculated to maintain smooth relationships than strict adherence to truth. Truth is not good in itself nor is a lie always evil. Lies are objected to when they are socially inconvenient. Yet not only is it expected that a man will lie to get out of difficulties but there are cases in which lying is prescribed, as when children are told to lie to strangers if asked about village affairs. To keep tribal secrets and the secrets of initiation schools is of far greater importance than to tell the truth.

831 The social orientation of morality is clear in Lovedu sex morality. Sex is not regarded as a temptation to be resisted by painful efforts of will.

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There is nothing morally wrong in sex or the sex act; not only is sex play among small children connived at, but premarital sex relations are institutionalized. It is only having a child before marriage that is immoral. For adultery restitution must be made, yet a husband who is jealous and watches his wife too closely is despised, and most men and women have extra-marital lovers (*natavo*). The Lovedu attitude is less strict than that of the Tsonga living among them, for Tsonga married women are expected to be faithful to their husbands, and the compensation and fine for adultery are far higher than among the Lovedu. The Lovedu attitude to sex is matter-of-fact, and obscenity in ritual does not have a prominent role. Sex is handled with moderation: men are warned against the dangers of promiscuity; they learn from their proverb that 'a woman's pubes may break up a family', but passion is not esteemed and sex techniques are undeveloped. [831]

To anyone brought up in the West European culture, where every breach of the moral code is also a sin in the eyes of a God who may punish the wrongdoer either in this life or the hereafter, an arresting aspect of Lovedu culture is that there is only a vague connexion between the ancestor-gods and morality. It has been said for the South Bantu in general, and by more than one authority, that the ancestors 'are the guardians of the moral code, it is they in the first instance who are thought of as visiting on their descendants punishments for some omission or commission'. There is among Lovedu a vague idea that failure to carry out one's kinship obligations may bring ancestral displeasure in the form of bad luck, and there may also be some connexion between such displeasure and *mahava*, the force generated by complaints of living kin, which causes illness. But a careful study of Lovedu religious practices over a period of years has brought to light no single instance in which ancestors have complained about anything not immediately concerning their own personal relations with their descendants—their right to tendance, remembrance, and propitiation; the manner of their burial; their desire to be told of major events in the lives of living kin. No ancestor has ever been known to concern himself with the theft, witchcraft, murder, or adultery of any descendant, nor do they trouble about the breaking of taboos which prevent rain and vitally affect the welfare of all. Lovedu ancestors are not upholders of custom in general; they are concerned only with those customs and taboos which affect their own welfare and that of their kin. Even royal ancestors do not concern themselves with the breaking of taboos that lead to drought. This is not a reflection of their carelessness or supineness, for they are quick to complain if, for example their graves are desecrated. On one occasion in 1938, when two men had cut firewood in the bush near the royal burial grounds at Maulwi, the *swidajani* wailed all night to indicate their displeasure. Again when Mologwane, deceased chief councillor and brother of the queen, 'held her [777]

¹ A. W., Hoernlé, 'Religion in Native Life', in *Thinking with Africa*, edited by Milton Stauffer, 1928, p. 100. See also, W. C. Willoughby, *The Soul of the Bantu*, 1928, pp. 381-90. [753] •